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TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO TW
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their news coverage August 14 on the indictment of media baron Gary Wang on charges of embezzling more than USD 1 billion in corporate funds, and on the remarks of former U.S. ambassador to the UN John Bolton, in which he stated that Taiwan's representation in the UN is "appropriate."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, the pro-independence "Liberty Times" said in an editorial that the transit arrangements for President Chen Shui-bian's Central America visit next week are a test of U.S. resistance to China's pressure. End summary.

"The Treatment of President Chen's Transit in the United States Is Trying U.S. Ideals and Its Capability to Resist Pressure"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] editorialized (8/14):

"... In other words, when President Chen made the 'four-noes and one-without" pledge, which is equal to limiting Taiwan's pursuit of sovereignty, he would receive very good transit treatment. He could even receive a human rights award, give a speech and hold big banquets for local overseas Taiwanese in New York. Therefore, although superficially called as transit, the trip was, in fact, a U.S. visit. The destination countries were secondary goals compared to the cities in which he stopped over. In contrast, when President Chen emphasized Taiwan's sovereignty by making the 'one country on either side across the Strait' statement, announcing the 'cease in functioning of the National Unification Council and the National Unification Guidelines,' promoting a 'defensive referendum,' or [proclaiming] a 'referendum on Taiwan's UN bid,' then would come China's overwhelming pressure [Ed. Note: idiom used here literally means "move mountains and overturn seas]. As it is hard for the United States to withstand the pressure, Washington would downgrade the level and place of President Chen's transit to barely satisfy China. And U.S.-Taiwan relations went into a low ebb.

"... If Taiwan is willing to degrade itself, settle for second best, be content with not being a normal state, and give up its pursuit of an independent national identity, then President Chen can have a high-profile transit through the United States. Or else, if Taiwan wants to be itself and does not want to be a part of China, then it will be gain the ill fame of being the troublemaker that breaks the status quo and receive harsh treatment from the United States.

"... Taiwan has its own national designation, territory, government, [population of] 23 million people, healthy democracy and prosperous economy. Why can't it be a UN member? Why can't it hold referenda to demonstrate its national will to join the international community? What is wrong with the proposed UN bid referendum? The whole nation should support President Chen's insistence on ideals and on maintaining national identity and dignity without caring for his personal honor or disgrace. As for whether the United States will let President Chen transit the U.S. mainland [sic; should be

"continental United States"], it will be a test of U.S. ideals and its capability to resist pressure."

YOUNG